



For Immediate Release: 06/16/22

Rory M. Christian, Chair

Contact:

James Denn | James.Denn@dps.ny.gov | (518) 474-7080

<http://www.dps.ny.gov>

<http://twitter.com/NYSDPS>

22057 / 22-E-0222

PSC Directs Utilities to Conduct Climate Vulnerability Studies

New York's Utility Regulator, Recognizing Climate Change Dangers, Takes Action

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today initiated a proceeding to require major electric utilities to perform climate vulnerability studies to help prepare for the expected increase in severe weather expected from climate change. The implementation plans, which will be subject to Commission review and consideration, will detail what changes the utility needs to make to prepare for harsher climate realities, including stronger storms and more flooding.

“The studies that will be conducted and the plans that will be submitted will detail how each of the major electric utilities will incorporate climate change into planning, design, operations, and emergency response,” **said Commission Chair Rory M. Christian.** “Incorporating climate change into existing processes and practices will help manage climate change risks and build resilience.”

According to the Commission's decision, adherence to such plans will enable electric utilities, and their electric service customers, to be better prepared to respond to, reduce damage from, and reduce restoration costs of future extreme weather events and the impacts of climate change.

The Commission initiated the proceeding to implement requirements of legislation signed by Governor Kathy Hochul that requires gas and electric utility corporations to submit a climate change vulnerability study to evaluate each electric corporation's infrastructure, design specifications, and procedures to better understand the electric system's vulnerability to climate-driven risks.

Given the potential impacts of climate change on the provision of utility services, it is necessary for utilities to earnestly consider these impacts as part of their future decision-making. Both the studies and the plans will be subject to public review. Comments are expected by the electric utilities and interested parties concerning content of the studies and proceeding process, including potential implementation plan screening criteria for Commission consideration.

The studies will be submitted by Central Hudson Gas & Electric, Consolidated Edison, National Grid, NYSEG, RG&E and Orange & Rockland by September 2023, evaluating each electric corporation's infrastructure, design specifications, and procedures to better understand the electric system's vulnerability to climate-driven risks. To address the results and conclusions of the utility studies, each utility is mandated to file by November 21, 2023, a climate vulnerability and resiliency plan to address the results/conclusions of the study for the next 10 and 20-year periods.

By March 22, 2023, each utility will establish a working group concerning issues and development of each plan. Each plan shall explain the approach the corporation will follow to mitigate the impacts of climate change to utility infrastructure, reduce restoration costs and outage times associated with extreme weather events and enhance reliability. By October 21, 2024, the Commission is to either approve or modify the plans, following a public hearing. Each corporation must file an updated storm plan with the Commission for approval at least every five years. The Long Island Power Authority board will be considering the issue separately.

The prudent costs for implementing the plan will be recovered in each utility rate proceeding following the Commission's plan determination. For capital projects placed into service and additional unrecovered costs incurred prior to base rates being reset, cost recovery is through a climate resiliency cost recovery surcharge.

New York State's Nation-Leading Climate Plan

New York State's nation-leading climate agenda is the most aggressive climate and clean energy initiative in the nation, calling for an orderly and just transition to clean energy that creates jobs and continues fostering a green economy as New York State recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. Enshrined into law through the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, New York is on a path to achieve its mandated goal of a zero-emission electricity sector by 2040, including 70 percent renewable energy generation by 2030, and to reach economy wide carbon neutrality. It builds on New York's unprecedented investments to ramp-up clean energy including over \$35 billion in 120 large-scale renewable and transmission projects across the state, \$6.8 billion to reduce buildings emissions, \$1.8 billion to scale up solar, more than \$1 billion for clean transportation initiatives, and over \$1.6 billion in NY Green Bank commitments. Combined, these investments are supporting nearly 158,000 jobs in New York's clean energy sector in 2020, a 2,100 percent growth in the distributed solar sector since 2011 and a commitment to develop 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind by 2035. Under the Climate Act, New York will build on this progress and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85 percent from 1990 levels by 2050, while ensuring that at least 35 percent with a goal of 40 percent of the benefits of clean energy investments are directed to disadvantaged communities, and advance progress towards the state's 2025 energy efficiency target of reducing on-site energy consumption by 185 trillion BTUs of end-use energy savings.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 22-E-0222 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.